



News Release

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Flu season late but finally arrives – activity on the rise in Washington

It's not too late to vaccinate

OLYMPIA — Flu season has been slow to arrive in our state, but influenza is now increasing in most Washington communities.

It's often hard to predict the timing and severity of each flu season, and this season is no exception — arriving later than usual. While flu most commonly peaks in February, we have not yet reached peak flu activity this season in Washington.

“Flu is a serious disease that puts many people in the hospital and claims a lot of lives each year in our country,” says Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “Fortunately, we have a vaccine that offers the best protection against flu. We can all do our part to protect our communities.”

Everyone six months and older should get a flu shot each year. Some children under age nine may need two doses about four weeks apart to be fully protected.

The flu is different from a cold. It often causes fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, headaches, and fatigue. Most healthy adults can spread the flu before they know they're sick and for up to seven days after. Children can spread it for even longer. To avoid spreading the flu, people should wash their hands, cover their cough, and stay home if they're sick.

If you're sick with flu, antiviral medications can lessen symptoms and help prevent serious complications. They work best when started quickly. People at high risk for complications who develop flu-like symptoms should contact their doctor promptly to see if they need medication. Those at high risk include people with certain medical conditions, pregnant women and women who recently gave birth, young children, and people 65 years and older.

Late-arriving flu season picks up in Washington

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Flu season is gaining momentum at a time when [whooping cough is already very active](#) in many communities in our state. [Anyone can get whooping cough](#) but it is most serious for infants. All teens and adults should get a whooping cough booster, called Tdap vaccine, to help stop the spread of this disease and protect babies.

To find an immunization clinic, call your healthcare provider, visit a local pharmacy, use the Department of Health [Flu News website](#) or call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

The [Flu Vaccine Finder](#) is also a good resource.

The [Department of Health website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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